DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 302 EC 111 787

AUTHOR Butler-Arlosoff, Nava
TITLE Training Teachers Towards Responsibility in Future Education: Innovative Models.
PUB DATE Jun 78
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the World Congress on Future Special Education (First, Stirling, Scotland, June 25 - July 1, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Differences; *Disadvantaged Youth; Foreign Countries; *Gifted; Handicapped Children; Inservice Teacher Education; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Israel

ABSTRACT

The importance of teacher education is stressed, and two models for teacher education in Israel, one for teachers of gifted children in an urban environment and the other for training teachers of culturally different children, are offered. The teachers of gifted children were provided with a theory and practice course, a workshop, and practical teaching experience. The model of teacher training for disadvantaged areas focused on involving the teacher in the responsibility of changing educational attitudes through such activities as forming a group of local leaders to aid in changing attitudes. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED157302

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Training Teachers Towards Responsibility in Future Education : INNOVATIVE MODELS;

by NAVA BUTLER-ARLOSDROFF,
School of Education, HAIFA UNIVERSITY

This paper examines the role that can be played by pre and in-service education in preparing teachers to adjust to the changing concepts and needs of education in modern society.

In attempting to identify and define the problems facing education today, it seems to us, that many of them stem from the rapid changes that occur in society in general and in the schools in particular. Erikson (1963) claims that the rapidity in which changes will happen in the future will make human and institutional adjustment nearly impossible. The frustration and dissatisfaction with present day educational practices is most apparent in the educational literature (Conant, 1963, Joyce, 1975, Reimer, 1971, etc., Unesco, 1972 3: Klassen et al (Ed) Innovation in Teacher Education, An International Perspective) and is expressed by Tofler in "Future Shock", who claims that educators should turn their efforts from the past to the future, thus facilitating the process of adjustment in their pupils' education.

One of the most problematic issues caused by the changing scene of modern society is that of the mobility of populations resulting in a much greater heterogeniety in the classroom population. However, if we examine teacher education, we find that it fails to equip the teachers to cope with present day conditions and far less so with those of the future. It seems

EC 111787

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C.E.C.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

to us that a new approach is needed in teacher education, which will provide a special education orientation, based on individual needs of children to all teachers.

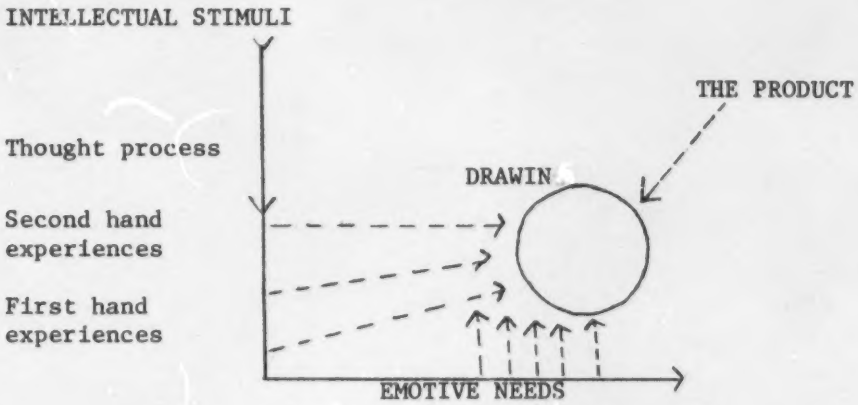
Psychologists have long been concerned with individual differences, but their methods have led to an emphasis on group differences, (Wilhelms, 1962) a trend which has influenced the curricula of teacher education which is structured around separate courses dealing with the backward, the handicapped, the educationally sub-normal, the culturally disadvantaged and the gifted. Moreover, the concept of stages of psychological development leads to the same kind of difficulty, since even where a clear distinction is maintained between developmental and chronological age groups, to outline the characteristics of children at particular stages in terms of their intellectual, emotional and social growth, is to encourage an emphasis on similarities rather than differences. (Kelly, 1974). All that has been discovered about the various groups is important for the teacher who has the task of educating members of them. However, prevailing trends in teacher education emphasizing separation of theory from its educational application in the actual classroom situation, tends to result in teachers using group labels when dealing with their pupils, practising homogeneity of approach and provisions, thus aggravating rather than solving individual problems.

The following examples illustrate this point:

A) The first example is taken from a special school in London. Upon entering a classroom of 14 year olds, with a group of my students, I noticed some very striking drawings on the wall. On asking the teacher whose work were they, he pointed to a boy, mentioning that he is unteachable, all he

does is draw. When approaching the boy, praising his drawings, he produced the following one and a book of drawings, offering them to me as a present.

In studying this drawing, you will probably be struck with a child whose potential has certainly not been fulfilled. The agony and conflict of this child is most marked in this drawing, which has provided him with a creative outlet of strong pent up feelings of anger and frustration. We can discover the synthesis of experience and thought with immediate emotive needs:



However, the sad fact remains that the waste in this child's life could have been prevented with a more adequate education of his teachers.

A1. The Drawing

B) The second example comes from a second grade child in a culturally disadvantaged area:

During a bible lesson the teacher was explaining the origin of the name of "Jacob" and was telling the class that: "Jacob was holding the heel of Issau....." A boy raised his hand and suggested that the tiny baby had no strength to grasp. The teacher answered: "He only grasped with one finger .....!"

Later she told me that he was a limited child who always asked silly questions.

This example highlights the serious problem of low expectations not only from the differently cultured child but also from his teachers. (We shall return to this problem in the second model of teacher education to be presented in this paper.)

C) The third example comes from an Arab village.

Writing a Hebrew dictation, four boys were noticed writing their own made up language composed of mixed Arabic and Hebrew letters. The teacher referred to them as backward children. Surprisingly they could read their writing which had its inner logic. Their so called backwardness stemmed from not having learned some of the letters needed to write the words correctly!

D) The last example is given by a highly gifted child ten years old.

This girl was considered strange and not very bright. She was always at odds with her teachers. During one lesson she was reproached for grinning and was told by her teacher: "To rub off the grin from her face." She took out a rubber and rubbed her mouth! She was promptly sent out and came to me. During our talk she complained bitterly that "schools for teachers should teach would-be teachers to understand the mind of children and should not select teachers who have no sense of humour."

Although courses in teacher training institutions deal with giftedness, teachers are not equipped with the tools to use the knowledge they gain in solving the problems of the individual child in the classroom. It is interesting to note that Piaget (1973) who contributed so much to our understanding of the learning processes of the child, emphasizes that the problem of the quality of teacher training is fundamental to all future educational reforms. He suggests that prospective teachers be given full university training. Although we would willingly agree that university education for teachers could contribute towards a deeper understanding of the individual developing child and his education, it seems to us that one should aim at creating integrative models based on a partnership of all factors involved in education at all levels: University lecturers, administrators, teachers, students and parents.

The following two models were initiated at Haifa University School of Education, and were desigend to train teachers to meet the needs of the exceptional child.

Their main aims were:

1) To enhance the teacher's understanding of individual needs of children through serious and relevant theoretical study.

2) To create dynamic groups consisting of pre-service, in service, teachers, administrators and parents sharing in the learning experiences and their educational application in the field.

3) To form a partnership of all the human resources concerned with education, to assume responsibility for future education in their community.

The first model deals with training teachers participating in the education of highly gifted children in an urban environment. The second

model is still in its initial stages and aims to bring about future educational changes concerning the exceptional child in a large developing town, set in a rural area of the country, consisting mainly of differently cultured oriental population.

Model A: The Background.

For the first time in Israel, in spring 1973, the Minister of Education and Culture decided on the creation of several experimental classes for highly gifted children within regular elementary schools in two large towns, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Although the concept of special educational programmes for the gifted was not an entirely novel one, as enrichment programmes have been in progress for some time, objections were raised to the idea of segregating gifted children in special classes.

However, the decision to open special classes was eventually taken in view of the very heterogeneous nature of the school age population which makes it extermely difficult to fulfill the psychological and educational needs of the exceptional child in the existing classroom situation.

A central team of advisers consisting of psychologists and educationists was formed to plan the project and to formulate educational objectives. However local needs dictated local policy. Thus it was decided in Haifa, which has a strong commitment to education, to place the classes in separate elementary schools in the hope that each class would serve as a "change agent" in local education in general and in the host school in particular. The programme has since been extended to include secondary age children.

As I live in Haifa and teach educational Psychology of the exceptional child at Haifa University, I was made responsible for the experiment in

Haifa. It seemed to us that the success of the project depended mainly on the extent of the involvement of teachers in the responsibility of its educational future.

Every experiment in education needs not only ideas, but also human resources and dynamic support from the public, professionals and the parents. Thus it was important to create a model of training which would constitute a partnership between all factors participating in the experiment.

In order to help teachers prepare themselves, it seemed to us that training should be carried out on the cognitive and affective levels.

On the cognitive level by providing them with initial help in theoretical aspects of the special population, as well as helping them in the planning of appropriate and relevant classroom situation.

On the affective level on creating a supportive team climate which would encourage them to share their ideas, experiences and difficulties with all parties concerned, and to develop with the group methods of solving problems together.

In order to try and implement our aims a new model was created which linked all parties concerned with the experiment in Haifa to Haifi University.

The following pattern was created:

1) A Theory and Practice Course

The principals of the schools, the teachers, local authority and Ministry administrators concerned with the project and parents, joined students attending a course given by me at the University of Haifa dealing with psychological and educational apsects of the gifted child. The course consisted of (a) a theoretical lecture -- one hour each week and (b) workshop -- one hour each week.

For this purpose each teacher worked with a representative group of all participants on the theoretical considerations raised on the lecture and their practical applications to the classroom situation.

2) Follow Up

During the week each group worked with the teacher in the special class and tried out some of the ideas discussed at the University. The teacher was responsible in involving the group and the children in tutoring children in topics of their interest or specialisation.

3) Feedback

Each week teachers and all groups reported back to the whole course at the University.

4) Advisory Week

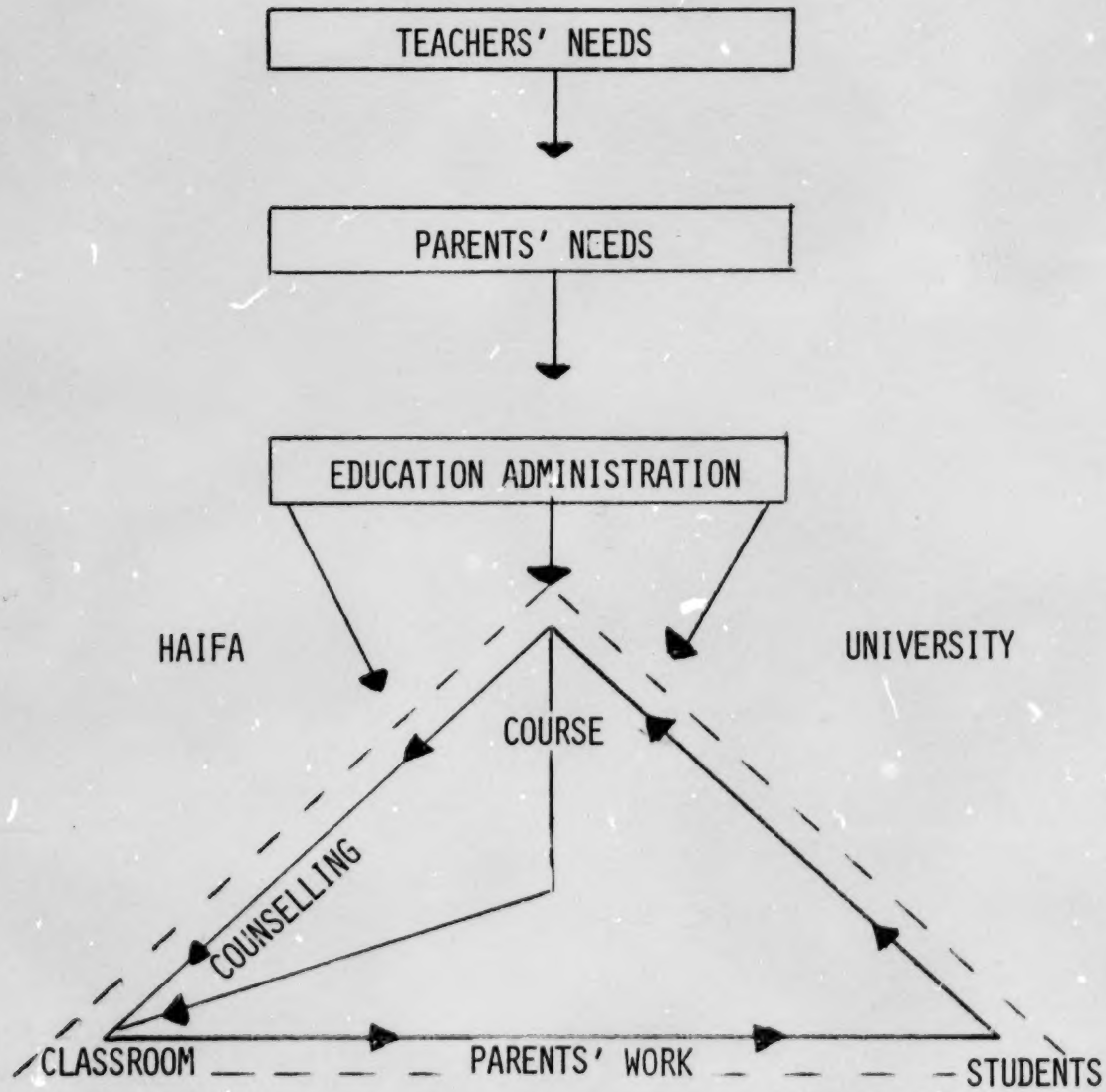
In addition to meeting the groups at the course, I visited each school regularly helping the teachers and the group cope with problems that arise.

It was hoped that the partnership arrived at by working together would serve to enhance understanding of the special needs of the exceptional gifted child and provide ample opportunities for cross-fertilization ideas. At this stage it is too early to fully evaluate the extent of our success in fulfilling our initial aims, however it seems to us that one can see an encouraging indicator in the fact that an involvement has been created through the joining of students and parents as teachers in the experiments thus constituting a living link with its educational future.

Model B: The Background

One of the main problems facing educationists and psychologists concerned with the education of the exceptional child is that of environmental

MODEL A: THE GIFTED EXCEPTIONAL CHILD



differences. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the dynamic relationship between environment and normal potential having frequently been researched, would affect the exceptional child, both gifted and weak. There is, however, a possibility that the high potential child will react differently to the normal or weak one in the same classroom situation. However, our experiences with differently cultured children has led us to suppose that the environment of a disadvantaged area encourages low expectations in the population in general and in its teachers in particular. It seemed to us that in order to fulfill the needs of the exceptional child in a disadvantaged area a model of teacher training should be created which would aim at involving the teacher in the responsibility of changing educational attitudes both at school and out of school.

To aid implementation we planned the following activities:

1) Raising the self image of the school population: This was done by testing the whole elementary school population to measure creative behaviour.

2) Visiting all schools and watching teachers at work.

3) Educational change through workshop situation.

Results of our testing and observations in the classroom were discussed with school principals. The principals having been greatly encouraged by our observations have selected one senior teacher to represent his school at the workshop.

The aims of the workshop are:

1) To form a dynamic group to be trained as local leaders in the school and the community responsible in helping to bring about attitudinal changes towards education.

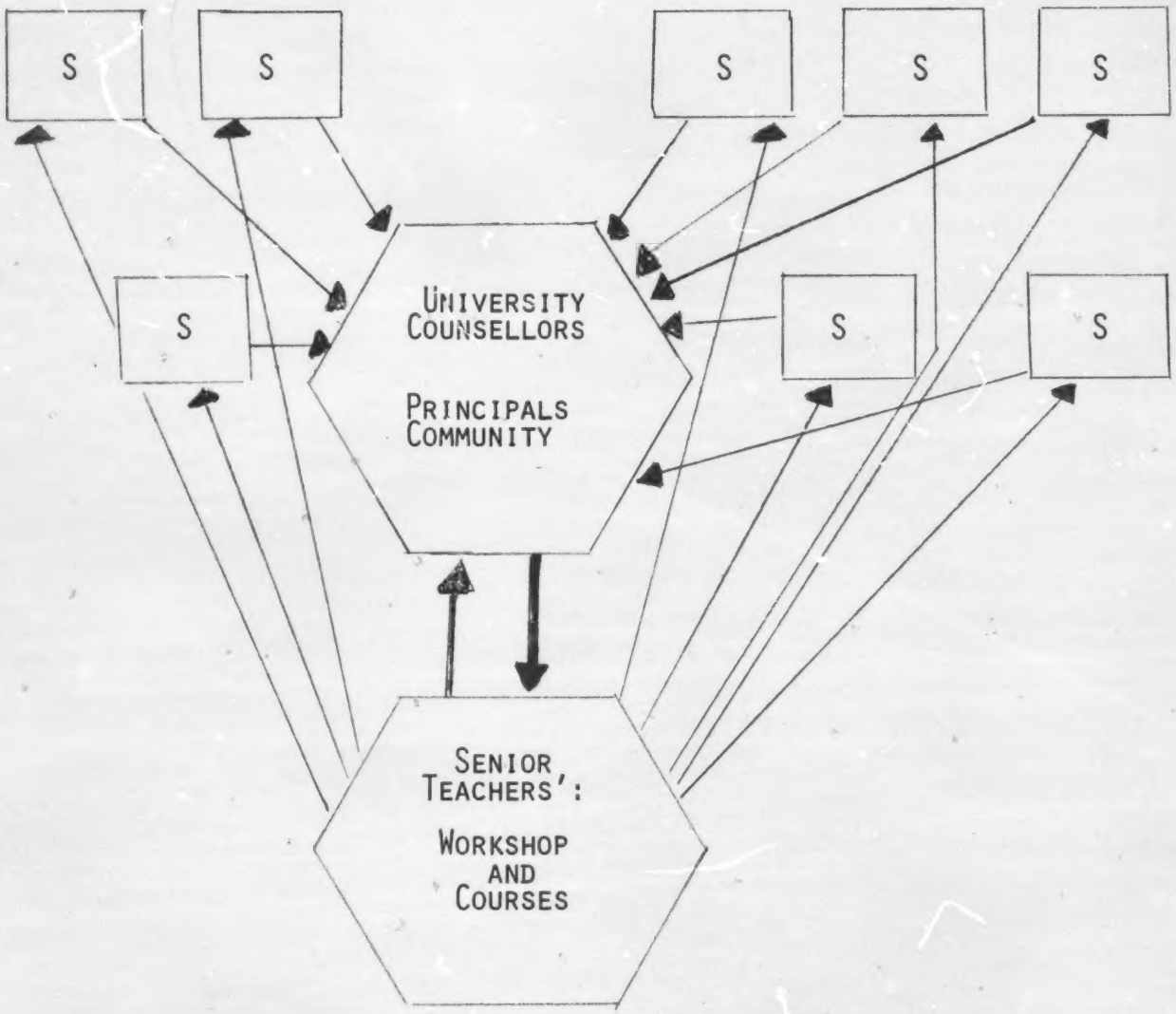
2) To help the group in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to help their school teachers in the following areas:

a. Identification of the exceptional child.

b. Providing an appropriate classroom situation in which the individual exceptional child, gifted and weak, could fulfill his educational needs.

3) To help the group from local groups consisting of parents and administrators to be involved with planning and implementation of various activities aimed at involving the community in the education of their children. This model is still at its initial stages of implementation. It is hoped that through the achievement of its aims the teachers involved with it will become active participants in the process of change toward a better future for the children they teach and their community.

MODEL B: THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD IN THE DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL



Bibliography

Butler, N.: Introducing and Implementing Educational Innovation; Creating Experimental Classes for Gifted Children. In: IDEAS, 28, University of London, Goldsmiths College, 1974.

_____ Reprinted in : Tradition and Change in Contemporary Education. Smith, L. A. (Ed.). University of London, Goldsmiths College, 1975.

_____ Israel's First Experiment in Special Classes for Gifted Children Within Regular Schools in: GIFTED CHILDREN, Looking to Their Future. Gibson & Chennels, Eds. Latimer New Dimensions, London, 1976.

Conant, J. B.: The Education of American Teachers, McGraw-Hill, NY, 1963.

Erikson, E. H.: CHILDHOOD AND SOCIETY, Norton, NY, 1963.

Gross, Neal, Giacquinta, Bernstein & Marilyn, Implementing Organization Innovations, Basic Books Inc., New York, 1971.

Joyce, B.: Conceptions of Man and Their Implications For Teacher Education. In K. Ryan (Ed.) Teacher Education 74th yearbook of the NSSE, part II, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1975.

Kelly, A. V.: The Education of Individuals. IDEAS, 28, University of London, Goldsmiths College, 1974.

Klassen mm et al (Ed.) Innovation in Teacher Education: An International Perspective, Unesco, 1972.

Piaget, J.: To Understand is to invent the Future of Education. Grossman, NY, 1973.

Reimer, E.: School is Dead, Penguin, 1971.

Tofler, A.: Future Shock